

CITY OF MESA
HUMAN RELATIONS ADVISORY BOARD (HRAB)
April 22, 2015 Minutes

The Human Relations Advisory Board (HRAB) of the City of Mesa met on April 22nd, 2015,
at 6:00pm in the Lower Level, City Council Chambers, 57 E. First Street.

<u>MEMBERS PRESENT</u>	<u>MEMBERS ABSENT</u>	<u>STAFF PRESENT</u>	<u>GUESTS</u>
Mark Tompert, Vice Chair	Tony Liuzzo	Bethany Freeland	
Cheryl Anderson	Cliff Moon	Anne Gervase	
Colleen Byron		Ruth Giese	
Karen Frias-Long		Paul Thomas	
Denise Heap		Ray Villa	
Frank Johnson			
Nadia Kahlighi			
Talmage Pearce			
Lu Ann Schmidt			

1. Chair's Call to Order.

Mr. Tompert called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

Ms. Heap announced her resignation as chair of the board. Mr. Tompert will field the chair duties in the interim.

2. Items from Citizens Present.*

There were no citizens who requested to speak.

3. Approval of minutes from the March 25th, 2015 meeting.

A motion was made by Dr. Byron to approve the March 25th, 2015 meeting minutes, Ms. Heap seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Discuss and take action on Mesa Police Department Report.

- Report on police related incidents and activities.

Ray Villa, with the Mesa Police Department (MPD), advised that the Pride Parade was a few weeks ago and the MPD was in attendance with a good turnout. They also participated in Pride Week at Mesa Community College. There were two officers there answering questions from students, also with a good turnout.

There was an incident at the Nile Theater on March 22nd, 2015. The incident involved a religious group who was protesting and burned two Qur'ans at separate locations. This group came to a meeting that the MPD was having and were creating a disturbance and blocking walking access for those attending. Later on that evening, a member of the religious group was assaulted by a person who frequents the area. After review, there was no actual assault that occurred. This incident highlighted the need to work with MPD officers on how to deal with protestors more efficiently. Ms. Heap says that she was contacted by the executive director of the festival that was going on at the time of the assault and that no police intervention was received. Ms. Heap stated that the protestors were using a bullhorn to communicate their message and that this is unlawful without a permit. Ms. Heap says that she also spoke with Assistant Chief Solberg who promised to contact Susan, the executive director of the festival, and that she still has not been contacted as of late. This was discussed with Commander Williams at the community meeting. It was suggested that the parameters of the festivals be expanded to allow the businesses involved to decide who can be in the festival space. It has also been

suggested that while festivals are being held that there is an open free speech area at the intersection of Robson and Main where protests may take place.

- Provide update on scheduling of meeting between Carmen Guerrero, Napoleon Pisano, Chief Meza, Ray Villa and HRAB members.

This meeting was cancelled and has plans to be rescheduled.

- Updates and scheduling of upcoming Police Advisory Board meetings.

MPD has their African American Advisory Board Meeting on the evening of April 22nd, 2015 at 6pm. Angela Booker is the Chair of the MLK Committee and she is unveiling a program called PAC that involves the MPD partnering up with community members.

5. Hear, discuss and take action on update of Mental Health Court.

This discussion was led by Mr. Paul Thomas, Mesa Court Administrator, and Ms. Anne Gervase, Sr. Court Program Assistant. They led the board through the improvement proposal for Criminal Rule 11, which governs mental health cases. The strategic plan for the Supreme Court is twofold with the Chief Justice emphasizing access to justice and also improving court services.

The first step in the current process involves a doctor doing a pre-evaluation to determine whether a more in depth evaluation is needed or whether the defendant is able to stand trial. If it is determined that the defendant has significant mental impairments then the case is sent to Superior Court. Once there, Superior Court requires two doctors to do an additional evaluation. Those reports then go to the Commissioner for a determination on the matter. What is proposed is that the entire evaluation period takes place locally as opposed to being passed around through the courts. This requires a change in jurisdiction from Superior Court back to the local courts.

As it stands, the current process can take around nine months for completion. In Mesa, when evaluating the front end of the process while trying to determine how to make a change, it was realized that there was a forty percent no show rate for defendants. This was determined to be due to the fact that as a person with mental health issues can sometimes become confused as to where to go for a doctor evaluation.

What the local court did was bring in two doctors to remain at the court and see the defendants there at a rate of several per day. This change brought the no show rate down to around five percent. Essentially, the process that used to take nine months has been compressed down to thirty to sixty days. The Board sees the value in the cost savings of the process, but is more focused on the humane treatment of people in need of assistance.

6. Hear, discuss, and take action on items presented by the Youth Diversity Education Team Sub-Committee.

- Provide an update on the planning of a diversity education project (including the topic of bullying) with the Baha'i community, Anti-Defamation League, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts and Gay Lesbian Education Network.

This item will be moved to the agenda for next month's meeting seeing as the YDET committee did not reach quorum and could not meet.

- Provide an update on planning a personal finance and nutrition class for youth.

Ms. Heap reminded the Board of the workshop being held Friday April 24th, 2015 at 5pm.

- Provide an update on Diversity education, information and building a working relationship with schools in Mesa.

This item will be moved to the agenda for next month's meeting seeing as the YDET committee did not reach quorum and could not meet.

- Provide an update on MLK Committee's Youth Leadership Development Conference.

This item will be moved to the agenda for next month's meeting seeing as the YDET committee did not reach quorum and could not meet.

7. Hear, discuss and take action on items presented by the Disabilities Action Team Sub-Committee.

- Discuss and consider the presentation from Mesa Fire & Medical Department on emergency care for citizens with mental health needs and recent awarded grant.

Ms. Anderson updated the Board on the presentation that was given by Cpt. Burgett at the DAT meeting. She emphasized the work that the FD has been doing to streamline the process and mitigate costs on mental health calls. She spoke about the amount of time that it now takes to get to the only available mental health facility, which is twenty seven minutes one way, and how that really impacts response time. Addressing this factor along with finding the correct location for a new mental health facility is detrimental to moving this project forward.

- Provide an update on the second town hall meeting to educate the community on mental health and substance abuse issues.

This meeting will be focused on businesses in Mesa. The Board has asked Bill McCallister to come and help plan the next second town hall meeting. He is involved in Marc Community Resources, Inc. and would be an asset to this meeting. The Board is looking to hold the next Town Hall meeting in September or October.

Mr. Tompert also brought up the fact that Mesa Chamber is trying to put together a "future employee" type of event. Right now they have a Federal Exemption Ticket from the Department of Labor which allows people to work for a stipend based off of how much work that they do. This is government funds and isn't equivalent to minimum wage. The goal is to get people actually hired and working for a wage. Ms. Schmidt also mentioned that there is a tax incentive for employees who hire individuals with disabilities.

- Provide an update on the feasibility of creating a Psychiatric Recovery Center in the East Valley

Ms. Anderson reiterated some of the points that were brought up in the presentation given by Cpt. Burgett. The need for the center is great due to the lack of available, local facilities for mental health care. The board believes that cost savings by having a local center will exacerbate the need for the center as well as good location. They believe the project to be very feasible.

- Provide an update on the ways to evaluate the adequacy of services and programs for people with disabilities and the implementation of ADA.

Ms. Anderson discussed the need to narrow down their goals as a board on the issues of ADA. She also made the board aware of the future purchase of the Braille Embosser.

8. Discuss and approve cancellation of June and July board meetings.

Ms. Heap made a motion to continue subcommittee meetings through the summer. Ms. Anderson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

9. Hear and discuss conferences and/or meetings.

Ms. Heap and three board members along with three council members attended the Phoenix Pride Parade together, along with a multitude of other city servants. Ms. Anderson was moved by the amount of Mesa supporters at the parade. Ms. Heap also went to a meeting with housing regarding the conference on Fair Housing being held in late September 2015. This meeting will be regional and will most likely be held in Phoenix. She also met with the Assistant Chief of Police of Mesa regarding the percentages of African American arrests as opposed to Caucasian in the city of Mesa. The statistics were unavailable for review at the time so the board will be requesting those from Mr. Villa.

10. Discuss and take action on scheduling of meetings, future agenda items, and general information.

- Next meeting will be held on May 20th, 2015.

Ms. Giese wanted the board to note that the last meeting is being held one week before the normal fourth Wednesday of the month due to that week being the week of Labor Day.

- Discuss and vote the selection of the position of Chair and Vice Chair for 2015/2016. (May)
- Film series screening is *Limited Partnership*, May 7th, 2015, 6:00pm, Dobson Library.

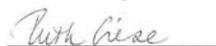
Dr. Byron stated that the last screening was very well done and that the panel discussion was engaging.

- Hear, discuss and take on Diversity Administrator's update on Title VI coordination. (May)
- Strategic Retreat will be on Sat. August 22nd, 2015 from 8am-12pm at 640 N. Mesa Dr.

11. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:00pm.

Submitted By:



Ruth Giese,
Diversity Program Administrator